

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please replace the abstract with the following amended paragraph:

Spinal anchoring methods and devices are provided that are effective to correct spinal deformities while allowing some flexibility to the ~~spinal~~ spine. In particular, the methods and devices allow a spinal fixation element to mate to several adjacent vertebrae to maintain the vertebrae at a fixed distance relative to one another, yet to allow the orientation of each vertebrae relative to the fixation element to adjust as the orientation of the patient's spine changes.